

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAJ-01 NEA-11 SCI-06 FEA-02 INT-08 TRSE-00

DRC-01 /146 W

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R 281743Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9740

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, BE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ANDRE COOLS

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 521 AND 340

(B) BRUSSELS 468 AND 393

1. SUMMARY: BELGIAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSB) CO-PRESIDENT
ANDRE COOLS GAVE AMBASSADOR STRAUSZ-HUPE HIS OVERVIEW
OF THE CURRENT BELGIAN POLITICAL CRISIS JANUARY 28.

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COOLS OUTLINED THE SOCIALIST PARTY SCENARIO BY WHICH,

AFTER NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN WHICH A UNITED PSB WOULD COMPETE WELL AGAINST SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTIES SPLIT BETWEEN THEIR FLEMISH AND WALLOON FORMATIONS AND ALSO WITHIN THOSE FORMATIONS, A NEW SOCIALIST/SOCIAL CHRISTIAN TWO-PARTY COALITION GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FORMED. COOLS STRESSED THE MODERATION OF PSB "RADICALIZATION" AND THE FIRMNESS OF PSB SUPPORT FOR NATO, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, AND STRONG BELGIAN-AMERICAN TIES. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER MEETING LAST WEEK WITH SOCIAL CHRISTIAN LEADERS NOTHOMB, VANDEN BOEYANTS AND EYSKENS (REFTELS B), AMBASSADOR STRASUZ-HUPE MET JANUARY 28 WITH PSB CO-PRESIDENT COOLS. COOLS EXPRESSED WARM APPRECIATION FOR THE LEADER GRANT VISIT TO THE US ARRANGED FOR HIM BY THE EMBASSY LAST SEPTEMBER. REVIEWING THE BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT CRISIS, COOLS SAID THAT THE PSB HAD DOUBTS FROM THE BEGINNING, A YEAR AGO, ABOUT THE WORKABILITY OF GOVERNMENT BY TRIPARTITE COALITION. UNDER SOCIALIST PREMIER LEBURTON, NEVERTHELESS, SOME ACHIEVEMENTS WERE SCORED, NOTABLY INCREASED SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AND AN EDUCATION ACT.

3. THE FALL OF THE LEBURTON GOVERNMENT, AS COOLS SEES IT, WAS DUE PRINCIPALLY TO THE CONDUCT OF THE FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIANS (CVP) WHOSE ACTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE IBRAMCO OIL REFINERY PROJECT REFLECTED DIVISIONS AND INDISCIPLINE WITHIN THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY. THE PSC AND CVP SOCIAL CHRISTIANS ARE NOW DIVIDED OVER THE QUESTION OF THE NEED FOR FURTHER CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. EVEN THE CVP IS DIVIDED INTERNALLY BETWEEN FLANDERS-ORIENTED PARTY PRESIDENT WILFRIED MARTENS AND THE MORE MODERATE AND NATIONAL-INTEREST-MINDED VICE PREMIER TINDEMANS. THE DAYS ARE GONE WHEN A GASTON EYSKEYS COULD EXERCISE ABSOLUTE CONTROL OVER THE CVP.

4. IN THE PAST, SAID COOLS, THE CVP AND PSC WERE UNITED BY COMMON CONCERN WITH SUCH ISSUES AS CATHOLIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SCHOOLS AND ABORTION. THESE ISSUES CONTINUE TO EXIST BUT THE INTENSITY OF RANK AND FILE CONCERN WITH THEM HAS MUCH DIMINISHED. CATHOLIC PARENTS ARE NO LONGER SO INSISTENT ON THEIR CHILDREN ATTENDING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, WHERE "THEY ARE ISOLATED FROM THE CONTENDING FORCES THEY ENCOUNTER AFTER GRADUATION."

5. IN THE SOCIALIST VIEW, THE LIBERAL PARTIES (PLP/PVV)

ALSO FEEL THEMSELVES SLOWING DOWN. THEIR TRADITIONAL SECULAR OBJECTIVES HAVE LONG BEEN ATTAINED. THEIR ECONOMIC CONSERVATISM IS LOSING APPEAL AND THEY ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE SPLIT ON REGIONAL AND LINGUISTIC ISSUES.

6. THE PSB, SAID COOLS, HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF DOCTRINAIRE DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF WORKER-SELF-MANAGEMENT ON THE YUGOSLAV MODEL. THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN DEBATED WITHIN THE PSB AND THE DECISION REACHED BY THE PARTY LEADERSHIP AND THE RANK AND FILE THAT IN BELGIUM WORKER-SELF-MANAGEMENT IS UNDESIRABLE AND COULD ONLY SERVE CONFLICTING PARTICULARISMS.

7. THE PSB BELIEVES THAT NEW LAWS ARE NEEDED TO FACILITATE GOVERNMENTAL EXPROPRIATION AND NATIONALIZATIONS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF ENERGY. THE PSB WILL ALSO SEEK FURTHER LAWS REGARDING THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE RESPONSIBILITIES ("ACCOUNTANCY") OF CORPORATIONS, SUCH AS ALREADY EXISTS IN THE U.S. SINCE THE PSB "WILL PULL OUT ALL STOPS" ON THESE AND OTHER ISSUES IF IT REMAINS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT, SAID COOLS, PSC LEADERS LIKE NOTHOMB AND VANDEM BOEYNANTS HOPE THE PSB CAN BE INDUCED TO TAKE PART IN A FUTURE GOVERNMENT. COOLS, HIMSELF, WOULD ALSO PREFER A CONTINUATION OF SOCIALIST PARTICIPATION.

8. COOLS' READING OF THE IMMEDIATE TACTICAL SITUATION FACING TINDEMANS IS THAT A MINORITY GOVERNMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY BY GOING INTO DEBT TO THE LINGUISTIC-FEDERALIST GROUPS (VOLKSUNIE, FDF/RW) AND IN THE PROCESS STIMULATING INTRANSIGENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPPOSITION FROM THE PSB. TINEMANS, SAID COOLS, IS AN HONORABLE AND INTELLIGENT ADVERSARY BUT HE CANNOT CONTROL THE FLEMISH SOCIAL CHRISTIANS AND HE IS VULNERABLE TO HIS CVP COLLEAGUES MARTENS AND CHABERT.

9. IN RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S QUESTIONS ABOUT PSB FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES, COOLS STRESSED THE FIRMNESS OF PSB SUPPORT FOR THE NATO ALLIANCE AND THE EC, CONTINUED "RESPONSIBLE" US INVESTMENT IN BELGIUM, AND STRONG US-BELGIAN TIES. NO FACTION OF THE PSB OPPOSES THE NATO ALLIANCE. STRAUSS-HUPE

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